ONCE UPON A TIME IN MEXICO

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TROUBLEMAKER STUDIOS
AUSTIN * TEJAS

What you are about the see has little or no basis in reality. My apologies to Mexico, for this bears no resemblance to that great country.

We just liked the title.

-Troublemaker Studios

1 INT. EL PATO LOCO - RESTAURANT - DAY 1

SANDS, a well dressed and relaxed CIA agent, sits comfortably at a small table. We can't see his face yet.

Looking over his shoulder we see BELINI, a Mexican, sit down across from him. Belini has a patch on his eye.

SANDS
I never heard of him.

BELINI
Who?

Sands holds up a small piece of paper.

SANDS
The man you recommended.

BELINI
The guitar fighter? Cleaned out a couple of towns single handed. Real nut. Oh, I'm sure you've heard of him. Just didn't know he was the one you were hearing about. You should meet him.

SANDS
That's what I want.

A waitress places a plate in front of Belini.

WAITRESS
Puerco Pilbirl.

SANDS
That's mine.

She passes it over.

WAITRESS
Perdon.

BELINI
Well I'm not making the introduction. I'm not ever looking that man in the eyes again.
(MORE)

BELINI (cont'd)
Send in one of your cockroaches to dig him up.

SANDS
(re: paper)
Well, Belini, I've never heard of him.

BELINI
Were you working Mexico during the Barrillo Cartel massacres?

SANDS
No.

BELINI
That was the first I heard of... 'him.' They used to say he was the biggest Mexican you'd ever seen. Which was bullshit.

(Note: During this sequence we'll SEE the tall tale Belini weaves. His descriptions serve as counterpoint to the montage of images, giving us the readers digest version of a series of events that could have been it's own mini movie.)

2 INT. TALL TALE BAR - NIGHT 2

Mariachi is in a bar with a roomful of rogues and assorted dangerous baddies.

BELINI
He was 5'10, 5'11 tops. Which puts him ahead of most of us, but it's no record. Now Marquez. There's a big dude.

MARQUEZ : Mexican Military Man. Hard ass. Crook. Bastard. Stands from his bar stool and walks towards Mariachi. They face off like gunslingers. Ten paces from each other. Marquez has a gun by his side. Mariachi has only his guitar case.

BELINI
Marquez had it in for this Mariachi...

A fight is about to break out. Guns are pulled. Threats are made.

BELINI
They called him that because he was known to carry a guitar case.

We see Mariachi drop the case on the ground and open it. Marquez aims his gun. The Mariachi leaps to his feet. HOLDING A GUITAR. The patrons laugh. The other patrons laugh at the sight. Mariachi begins to pluck a simple tune.

SANDS
A guitar case?

BELINI
Yeah. And let's just say... he knew how to play.

Mariachi plucks faster and faster. Finally... The guitar begins to FIRE bullets from it's NECK.

SANDS
You've gotta be kidding.

BELINI
Look, this story is well travelled, it's bound to pick up some embellishments along the way. Just read between the lines.

We see an awesome display of Mariachi's resourcefulness and gunfighting techniques in a CLEVER AND INVENTIVE ACTION SCENE. Everyone is against the Mariachi. EVERYONE LOSES.

BELINI
And he was the kind of guy that wouldn't stop playing till the last note hit the floor.

We see the last patron fall on his face. Mariachi uses other people's fallen weapons to finish the job. Mariachi is OUT OF AMMO. He drops the gun.

BELINI
Now he may not have been the biggest Mexican, but SHE was definitely the most knock dead gorgeous woman you'd ever seen. As deadly as she was beautiful.

SANDS
She?

Several men, about 5, raise their pistols to Mariachi's head. He stands.

BELINI
When he was out of ammo. *She'd* take over.

The camera does a dramatic steadicam move, ending low behind CAROLINA. The men, including Mariachi, all look over at her. She opens part of her skirt, revealing the arsenal of knives aligned in sheaths wrapped around her thigh.

The men are distracted for a split second by her beauty, which is all the time she needs. Five men receive five throwing knives. THUNK THUNK THUNK.

We see CAROLINA at work. Very impressive feats of knife throwing and fighting prowess. No 'Wire Fu' or other nonsense. This is bare knuckle fist on skin coolness. REAL fighting. Well, maybe not too real. This is a tale spun by the unreliable narrator, so there is licence taken.

BELINI
But that's where the trouble began. See, at one time, she and Marquez were a pair. When Marquez saw she was with the Mariachi, he went crazy... tracked her down. Fought Mariachi to the death.

More flashbacks. More inventive action and strange predicaments. Mariachi and Marquez face off again. Mariachi wins.

BELINI
Only Marquez didn't die. So he hunted them down. And since Marquez was military, he was able to get cooperation from law enforcement as well as the cartels.

See Mariachi and Carolina handcuffed together by authorities. Metal shackles that are welded on, no key. They escape in a raging storm of flying bullets.

BELINI
Mariachi already had a shady past involving the cartels... so now they ALL wanted him dead.

We see Marquez looking down from A HOTEL BALCONY. Dark. Menacing.

BELINI
I never heard what happened after that. Maybe Marquez caught up with them. Or the cartels.

We see Mariachi in pain. Suffering... Carolina screaming. Horrible things may have happened. But what?

SANDS
And his girl?

BELINI
No one knows.

CUT TO:

3 **INT. RESTAURANT - BACK TO SCENE - DAY** 3

Back to the present scene.

BELINI
Might all be bullshit. But the Mariachi is alive today. Someone I know saw him in that town I wrote down on that paper. If he's managed to survive all these years... He'd be the one you want.

The camera finally pushes around to reveal SANDS.

SANDS
(deadpan)
That's... Unbelievable.

BELINI
Yeah, well. I'm not big on telling stories. So, where's the money you owe me, that's what we're really here for.

Sands puts a vintage Clash of the Titans lunch box on the table.

BELINI
Cute.

SANDS
Couldn't find a briefcase small enough for 10,000 in cash.

BELINI
(tossing him a small envelope)
It'll do.

Belini slides the lunchbox over to himself. Begins to open it.

SANDS
I offered you fifty. Why'd you say no?

Belini peaks inside the case. Sands peeks inside the envelope.

BELINI
Because I'm not a greedy man. I have no interest in getting rich quick. And because for what you asked me to do, 50 thousand is too much money. So much that you might just put a bullet in my head as soon as cough up the cash. Am I right?

Sands doesn't smile. He just sits there with his hand on his fork, the other on his glass.

BELINI
Ten however... ten is civilized. Ten is something we can both live with.

Sands takes a sip of his tequila and lime. Mildly threatening.

SANDS
Ten might still be too much.

Belini stops short. Is he serious?

BELINI
You'd kill me over ten thousand dollars? You wouldn't dare.

He snaps the case closed. He stands, finishes his drink. Eyes on Sands.

BELINI
You wouldn't dare.

Belini walks out.

We stay on Sand's sprawled posture, we see Belini walk out behind him. Sands looks over the contents of the envelope again.

Now try and follow this: Sands makes sure Belini is gone. He then lifts a bag onto the table with his right drinking hand. He then lifts his FAKE LEFT ARM that was holding the fork, deflates it slightly, and places the arm in the bag.

Sands' REAL arm comes up from UNDER the table, un-cocks his gun, placing it in his jacket. He closes the bag, stands, drops a few bills on the table and leaves. We stay on this frame until we see Sand's out of focus form leave the building. That's the kind of guy Sands is. And if this opening sequence is pulled off, anything else that happens in the movie will be accepted.

CUT TO:

4 **EXT. GUITAR TOWN - DAY (CREDITS SEQUENCE)** 4

The dusty skeleton of a once prosperous town, abandoned after the land laws changed. (Jaral de Berrio.) We see the town is full of artisans working on handmade guitars. Hanging from the awnings, on twisted twine, are unfinished GUITAR BODIES, necks, and assorted pieces of the classic instrument.

Gnarled hands string a guitar, then gingerly lift it. Exiting his tented shop is the proud owner, ALVARO. He stretches the guitar out to an unseen man. **(Spanish with English subtitles.)**

ALVARO
(Will you honor me, Senor, by trying it out.
(beat)
Please.)

MARIACHI
(taking it)
(You should learn to play.)

ALVARO
(That's why you're here.)

Mariachi is the town's guitar tester. He tunes the guitar as he walks away, playing the classic MALAGUENA. This is guitar accompanied at times by breathtaking and full Latin orchestration. (Ask Director for sample.)

Wide dusty streets as the Mariachi walks through them plucking his guitar. He stops every once in a while to stretch his DAMAGED, but healing hand.

Alvaro turns to his competitor friend, Omar. They sit side by side.

ALVARO
(Sounds beautiful doesn't it?)

OMAR
(Don't get too excited, he makes even the clumsiest piece of wood sound like that.)

ALVARO
(Yea, well... fuck you.)

Credits roll, during which various shots of Mariachi playing, seeing the surroundings he is so familiar with. Setting the flavor of the minimalist atmosphere and production design. This place is heavy on mood.

5 **INT. HACIENDA - DAY** 5

Mariachi walks through his BURNED AND TATTERED HOME, a MODEST BUT MAJESTIC HACIENDA at one time, it is a now a vacant shell. He passes two grave markers, unknown to us right now. He walks atop the Hacienda and stands above the town, playing the guitar. Lost in a song that builds to an OPERATIC CRESCENDO.

The credits and song end as TRUCKS approach. Fast and Furious. Mariachi furrows his brow. It begins. He ducks below into his skeletal home.

Children clear the street. Men and women hide. Some guitar makers choose their favorite guitars from off the twine hangers and run back into their tents with them. Alvaro and Omar sit and wait. Unmoving.

ALVARO
(Relax.)

The trucks arrive. Men dismount. Among them: EL CUCUY, a freaky half Mexican who steps out with such slow purpose he is set up immediately as 'He Who Should be Feared."

CUCUY
(I hear this is a town of gunmen.)

ALVARO
(We only make guitars.)

Cucuy smiles. Slowly...

CUCUY
"Mariachi."

Alvaro leans in, as if the clue is meaningless.

ALVARO
"Qual?" (Which)

Cucuy pronounces very slowly for emphasis.

CUCUY
"EL."

ALVARO
(I don't know who you mean, sir.)

Cucuy's black eyes bore holes through Alvaro. He turns to scan the town and read the wind. Cucuy pulls a brown cigarette out and prepares to light it. As he gives ALVARO his back, a few of his henchmen aim their guns at Alvaro. We are on CUCUY as he SNAPS his match into FLAME. On that cue, his men clear out Alvaro.

Cucuy blows smoke, still scanning the town. He turns back around to face Omar. Alvaro dies at their feet.

Cucuy isn't going to ask twice. He doesn't have to. The distraught Omar points to the skeletal building that is Mariachi's. Cucuy aims a gun at Omar's head, then turns to face the building. Waiting for the Mariachi to show himself.

Mariachi is up on the top floor. We can see from the blown out window that Cucuy is aiming his gun at Omar's head. Mariachi is clutching his guitar, eyes closed. He knows he must give himself up and does. Cucuy calls Mariachi down with a wave.

Mariachi is on street level now, walking towards Cucuy. All guns trained on him.

CUCUY
(An honor to be in your presence. There is someone else who wants to meet you.)

Mariachi looks down at the body of Alvaro. He hands the unfinished guitar back to Omar, who refuses it.

OMAR
(Take it. He made it for you.)

Mariachi on the back of a truck, guitar flat on his lap as they drive him away. Townsfolk step out to watch. No one waves.

As the Truck pulls ahead of camera we see that the peaceful looking Mariachi has at least TEN GUNS TRAINED ON HIM.

CUT TO:

6 **EXT- BARRILLO CARTEL HACIENDA - DAY** 6

This is the Barrillo estate. The Barrillo Cartel Massacres Belini spoke of were planned at this hacienda / mansion outside Mexico City. A MAN in a makeshift suit is escorted through the scores of guards/bodyguards to a waiting room.

An Anglo Bodyguard stands waiting. Almost bleached white hair, he pets a small CHIHUAHUA. This is BILLY CHAMBERS.

BILLY
You know if I were you, I'd turn back around right now. Go back where you came from. Keep your mind and your soul instead of selling it to these cocksuckers.

The Man in the Makeshift suit says nothing.

BILLY
You speak English?

The Man shakes his head, "No."

BILLY
I didn't think so.

7 **INT. MAIN HOUSE - SAME** 7

Heavily jeweled hands, like Liberace without the talent , stumble across a piano in search of a fitting note.

Billy, The Anglo Bodyguard, hides his Chihuahua behind his back, and interrupts the playing with a polite throat clearing. The Piano Player turns around. This is BARRILLO. The head of the Barrillo Cartel. He stands and joins his guest.

BILLY
(I present to you, Senor Blascoe.)

BARRILLO
(Welcome.)

Barrillo extends his jeweled hand. The Man in the makeshift suit, BLASCOE, is not rich, we realize. He's somewhat out of his element here. He shakes Barrillo's jeweled hand, which clangs a bit.

Barrillo holds onto Blascoe's hand a bit too long, and examines the Blascoe's face a little too thoroughly for comfort. Barrillo turns his own head from side to side while sizing up Blascoe. As if seeing if they could fit each other's skin. They almost could.

BARRILLO
Sit.

They both sit down, revealing DR. GUEVERA, who is standing right behind Senor Blascoe.

BARRILLO
(We hear you're interested in work?)

A little spooky, Dr. Guevera begins touching Blascoe's head. He then leans over slowly and looks from Blasoce's face to Barrillo's. You'd think this was routine from Barrillo's lazy expression.

BARRILLO
(I too am looking to start a new life.)

Dr. Guevera has completed his examination. Puts on his hat, and nods to Barrillo.

BARRILLO
(Today's your lucky day.)

Blascoe doesn't know any better, so he smiles happily.

CUT TO:

8 **INT. RESTAURANT - SANDS MEETS MARIACHI - DAY** 8

Different restaurant from the last one. More run down. Sands steps in. Cucuy waits for him at the door, then nods to the Mariachi, who is sitting at a booth. His back to us.

SANDS
What's his name.

CUCUY
None that I know of. They call him "EL" as in "THE.. "

SANDS
I know what it means. Alert the Barrillo Cartel. Let them know "EL" has come out of hiding.

Cucuy stops at this request.

SANDS
(sensing doubt)
Don't think. Just do as I say.

Sands goes to the booth. Mariachi is plucking a delicate tune on his guitar.

SANDS
Nice tune.

Mariachi nods.

MARIACHI
Something my brother taught me.

Mariachi stops playing. Putting the guitar delicately on his lap. He takes his glass.

MARIACHI
I killed him.

He sips his drink.

SANDS
(nods)
Yeah. I'd heard that.

Tension.

SANDS
I need your help. And I take it you now need mine...

(MORE)

SANDS (cont'd)
once the cartels get wind you've resurfaced. And even though I'm to blame for that... I can protect you.

MARIACHI
What help do you need.

SANDS
I need you to kill a man.

Mariachi lets the silence speak for him. Sands smiles.

SANDS
Have a bite of this.

Sands passes his plate to Mariachi. Mariachi doesn't move.

SANDS
It's for illustrative purposes, humor me.

Mariachi takes a bite.

SANDS
Puerco Pilbirl. A slow roasted pork. Nothing fancy, it's just my favorite. And I order it with a tequila and lime in every shithole dive I go to in this country. And honestly... this is the best it's ever been anywhere.

Mariachi takes another bite.

SANDS
In fact it's *too* good. So much that when I'm finished with this meal I'll pay my ticket, walk out back... and shoot the cook.

Mariachi listens.

SANDS
Because that's what I do. I restore the balance to this fucking country. And that's what I need from you right now. To pull the trigger.

MARIACHI
On the cook?

Sands takes a foto out and slides it to Mariachi.

SANDS
I'll do the cook. My car's parked out back anyway. You do... Marquez.

9 **EXT. HOTEL - FLASHBACK - DAY** 9

Mariachi has a quick FLASH. An IMAGE of Mariachi hanging from a window sill. Carolina below him. Both looking up at MARQUEZ, firing a gun down from a balcony, into camera.

SANDS
You remember Marquez? He's being paid by the Barrillo Cartel to kill the President in an attempted coup de etat.

MARIACHI
Attempted.

SANDS
Oh, the President will be killed. He's that piece of good pork that needs to be balanced out. I say attempted, because we don't want Marquez taking power. He's insane. So I need you to air out Marquez AFTER him and his men have killed the President and caused enough unrest that I can go in and do what I need to do.

MARIACHI
Why me?

SANDS
You've got nothing to live for. In a way, you're already dead. And Marquez is the man that killed you. So why not return the favor?

WE SEE quick flashes of the past. Marquez. Gunfire. Pain. Blood.

SANDS
Go here. Meet with Salome. I'll contact you after your meeting and we'll decide if we've got a deal.

Mariachi takes the foto with the contact written on the reverse. Along with the cell phone Sands slides him. Mariachi leaves.

Sands finishes his pilbirl as the check arrives. He watches Mariachi go. Sands pays and then stands. He turns and walks the other way. The camera is on the move with him.

Sands opens the swinging kitchen door. We see a large COOK yelling orders at some poor underling prep cook who did something wrong.

Sands walks right through them, punching 4 SILENT BULLETS into the Cook's heart as he goes.

Sands walks briskly out the back, as we hear yells of panic and shock. Sands gets in his car and drives away.

CUT TO:

10 **INT - OFFICE OF FEDERALE AGENTS- DAY** 10

In a procedure not unlike the American way of handing out assignments, the office of federale agents has gathered for a briefing. A top official speaks slowly and emphatically.

CHIEF FEDERALE
The large shipment of guns that were seized at our border have not been accounted for. Sanchez. You are now off that assignment. Who wants to volunteer.

We see the small sea of federale agent faces. All men. Except one. AGENT AJEDREZ, young, determined, strong. She raises her hand. So does another agent sitting nearer the front. Chief picks the MAN closest to him.

CHIEF FEDERALE
Okay. You. Gomez. It's yours. There has been activity in the Barrillo Cartel that has been raising suspicions. Large payments, deliveries, whispers of a political takeover. The team of Vasquez and Cardenas is being dissolved. I need new point men. Who wants this?

No hands. Agent Ajedrez raises hers. She is the only hand raised. Chief doesn't see her hand. He has a mental block. He picks out someone from behind her.

CHIEF FEDERALE
Okay. Romero. It's yours. Pick your secondary person. A Third if you have to.

Romero nods.

CHIEF FEDERALE
Onto other business.

Romero leans forward and whispers to Ajedrez.

ROMERO
Don't worry, you're in.

AJEDREZ
Thank you.

She shakes her head at the injustice. An everyday occurrence.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. CHURCH - DAY 11

Mariachi is sitting on the steps of the Santa Cecilia CHURCH. He looks at the back of the MARQUEZ foto he got from Sands. It says 3 o'clock written on the back and the name of the church and contact. He puts the foto away. He's got a few minutes. He starts to play his guitar. A tune... soulful... longing.

MOMENTARY FLASHBACK - We see Mariachi asleep peacefully in a bed as morning sunlight bathes across the room in streaks. A woman leans over and kisses his face with a whisper.

Mariachi, sitting on the steps of the church... closes his eyes.. the music speeds up. Suddenly... HE IS THERE.

CUT TO:

12 INT - HOTEL ROOM - FLASHBACK - FOUR YEARS EARLIER - MORNING 12

Mariachi wakes with a start, turning his head towards the door in this beaten up and dirty hotel room.

The darkness of the room adds to the mood, a few light shafts piercing the room ILLUMINATE his face.

Mariachi pulls up his hand. The light focuses our attention on the NASTY SCAR that covers his hand.

We see that he has a strange set of HANDCUFFS chained to his wrist. The way he looks at the chains make us realize he had forgotten they were ever there.

The person at the other end of the chain awakes slowly, confused, dazed...

This is Carolina, and she's a slow riser to say the least.

CAROLINA (CONT'D)
(whisper)
What's wrong?

His eyes scope the room. Suddenly alert. Maybe he never sleeps, and is angry that he actually dozed the few minutes that could mean their lives. She knows that look.

MARIACHI
Everything.

His eyes dart to the nearest window. He PULLS her from the bed and they DIVE THROUGH THE WINDOW as the room EXPLODES in GUNFIRE.

The couple in chains run for their lives down a narrow hallway of this FIVE DOLLAR HOTEL, (almost in sync with each other), and end up outside on a crumbling BALCONY.

13 **EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - SAME** 13

Mariachi glances down over the perilous 5 story drop into the busy Mexican STREET below.

He tries to shoot the handcuffs off by firing repeatedly at the chain. Nothing.

Gun wielding Goons CRAWL over the building like angry spiders... BLOCKING all exits and BLASTING away at anything that steps within their sights.

MARIACHI
Any suggestions, Ms. "They Don't Know Where We Are This Time Why Not Get a Room on the Fifth Fucking Floor?"

CAROLINA
(Suck it, asshole.)

MARIACHI
I didn't think so.

He shoves her over the side.

MARIACHI
Swing.

The Goons are running at them, blasting.

Carolina SWINGS by the chain alongside the building like a confused trapeze artist.

She swings towards a BROKEN PIPE jutting out of the wall beside her.

MARIACHI
Grab it!

She does. Now she's holding the pipe and he's standing on the balcony. His arm outstretched to hers, the CHAIN taut between them.

The wall around him EXPLODES in gunfire. So he does it...

He jumps off the balcony.

MARIACHI
Hang on!

Carolina screams as the inevitable happens.

Mariachi SWINGS like a monkey by the chain they're attached to, her other hand anchoring them from sure death by holding onto a now BENDING pipe.

The force of his body weight wants to rip her arms from her sockets. We hear her joints POPPING with the strain.

She spits in excruciating pain as his full weight swings below her.

CAROLINA
(to herself)
(Sonofabitch!)

Mariachi completes his swing and GRABS onto a strand of metal wires jutting from the building.

When he has a firm grip he looks up and sees her pained face, and the Goons appearing above her. Guns aiming down on her, ready to fire.

CAROLINA
Lose weight, (motherfucker!)

MARIACHI
(quietly)
Let go NOW.

She gladly lets go of the pipe not knowing what happens next and at this point not caring very much either. The gunfire from above kills the pipe she was holding a half second before and bullets follow her closely.

She swings like a monkey, down to the next floor, as Mariachi now anchors them with his hand firmly gripping the metal wires that are now slipping out of the building.

She sees herself swinging into the bottom of a fire escape. A pole holding up the structure is within her reach.

MARIACHI
Grab something!

CAROLINA
(teary eyed)
No!

The Goons are repositioning themselves over Mariachi now, trying to get a clear shot free from the air condition units that partially block their shot.

MARIACHI
(Grab it goddamit!)

She does.

Mariachi lets go of the wires as the AC units above him EXPLODE in a shower of sparks and rusted metal.

Carolina screams once again as the sheer weight of Mariachi pops her shoulder joints again, tearing a few muscles, no doubt, as the veins on her neck strain like thick cords. Spit pours from her mouth as her teeth GNASH violently, GRINDING into each other like chalk.

MARQUEZ is on the balcony now. He takes the gun from one of the GOONS, and aims it down at Mariachi. Mariachi sees this.

Mariachi swings and lands close enough to grab onto a window sill.

Carolina lets go as the fire escape above her erupts from MARQUEZ's gunfire.

The fire escape COLLAPSES, nearly hitting her on it's way down to the street.

As she swings she sees herself heading towards another pipe. She reaches out to the pipe.

MARIACHI (CONT'D)
Don't grab anything!

She darts her hand back. Suddenly realizing what this means.

Mariachi lets go just as she's reached her peak height.

They drop down on either side of a POWER LINE so that their CHAIN serves as a kind of makeshift PULLEY.

14 **EXT. STREET - SAME** 14

Before she can cry in protest or offer a better solution they are DESCENDING over the busy street, smack dab into an oncoming BUS.

The bus SMASHES into Mariachi, the impact which then KICKS Carolina back up and over the power line, freeing her to CRASH painfully onto the top of the bus like a lead brick.

Mariachi has fallen onto the HOOD, next to the windshield he so gracefully SMASHED when the bus HIT him.

The Goons FIRE mercilessly at the escaping bus.

MARQUEZ STARES DOWN AT THEM... Dark. Menacing. THIS IS THE SAME SHOT WE SAW IN THE OPENING FLASHBACK SCENE OF THE MOVIE.

Mariachi pulls on the chain, dragging Carolina off the top of the bus as GIANT BULLET HOLES chase her all the way to her temporary safety on the hood next to Mariachi.

Mariachi looks inside the bus, aims his gun, and tells the driver to KEEP DRIVING. The driver opens his side door and LEAPS out!

Mariachi sees they are heading towards a busy intersection. He pulls Carolina with him and they run from the front end of the bus to the back end quickly and LEAP OFF the BACK as the bus slams into an intersection of TRUCKS and heavy vehicles. The explosion behind them as they leap is incred-

CUT TO:

15 **EXT. CHURCH - DAY** 15

MARIACHI WAKES from his flashback at the sound of the church bell.

He stops playing his guitar, and the memories stop. He stands. Slings the guitar over his shoulder and walks inside the church.

16 **INT. CHURCH - SAME** 16

Mariachi enters the church. Sits inside the confessional.

MARIACHI
Forgive me father for I have sinned.

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
When was your last confession?

MARIACHI
An hour ago.

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
And the name of your priest?

MARIACHI
Sands.

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
You are expected to carry out your assignment to the letter. Failure to do so is punishable by death, do you understand?

MARIACHI
Yes.

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
Failure to appear in designated locations at assigned times results in forfeit of protection. Protection you will definitely need. Are you aware the Cartel knows of your whereabouts? Part of our very thorough insurance plan. We needed you to be in danger for you to need our protection. So now you've got both.

MARIACHI
What's in it for me?

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
You get to breathe. That's a good one. You'll be paid. Handsomely. Coup de etats, like elections, don't come cheap. There is money. You'll get a piece of it. But better than all of that... you'll be free.

Mariachi reacts to this.

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
That's right. Free. Once and for all. From Marquez. From the Cartels. Even from the President... who isn't exactly a fan of your past.

MARIACHI
When do I begin?

Mariachi hears the "priest's" beeper buzzing.

MAN IN PRIEST GARB
I believe it already has. Wait for me a moment, please.

He leaves. The Mariachi sits alone. Examines the foto again. Hear's some noises outside his door.

MARIACHI
Padre?

Mariachi suddenly DIVES straight OUT OF THE CONFESSIONAL.

The booth is RIPPED to pieces by rampant SILENT GUNFIRE. Mariachi manages to leap and tumble over and up the BALCONY EXTENSION.

The men outside the booth pass information around to each other and SCALE THE BALCONY. There's about ten men, armed to the teeth with huge Silencers.

The <POFF> <POFFING> of the silencers is unsettling, due to the extreme damage caused by such quiet weaponry.

ONE GREY SUITED MAN leaps from atop a tall statue TO THE BALCONY and grabs the railing with one hand, searching his prey with the gun hand raised.

Mariachi STANDS and SWINGS his GUITAR at the Grey Suit, SMASHING the GUITAR to pieces ACROSS THE MAN'S FACE.

The Grey Suited Man FALLS BACKWARDS, SHOOTING at Mariachi ALL THE WAY DOWN. Mariachi reaches INSIDE the smashed, specially built guitar and removes a GUN that was BUILT INSIDE THE GUITAR.

Mariachi returns a single shot to the mid-air baddy.

The HUGE CRASH of the Mariachi's SINGLE, UNSILENCED gunshot ECHOES loudly through the church.

Mariachi leaps over the side of the balcony as the walls explode behind him. Men enter the upper level sanctuary. Flying over the balcony Mariachi reaches back and shoots a SINGLE bullet THROUGH the first THREE MEN coming through the door. Again the loud echo trails through the Room and continues till Mariachi hits the ground below.

Landing cat-like, the Mariachi grabs Grey Suit's silencer weapon. He does the sign of the cross while he's down on one knee.

We see a praying person with a rosary in the front row of the church. Lost in prayer.

THIS IS THE BIGGEST SHOOTOUT YOU NEVER HEARD.

This full scale shootout is inaudible save for the sounds of flesh ripping, bodies crashing to the floor, and the <POFF> of the silencers. All are participants in this bizarre Dance of Silent Death.

When the battle is over, only Mariachi and another Henchman, FIGUEROA, are left standing.

Mariachi spins around. Figueroa's automatic with it's SILENCER spits its deadly rounds in nearly inaudible <POFFS>.

The Mariachi leaps to the floor and aims his unsilenced pistol at Figueroa. He fires, sending Fig flying backward with a loud, insanely echoed BOOM.

Mariachi's phone rings. He answers it while examining the carnage strewn about.

SANDS
Still standing?

MARIACHI
Still.

SANDS
The Barrillo Cartel aren't very nice guys. But I guess Belini was right. You'll do just fine. Assemble your team. I'll call you with further instructions.

The phone clicks.

CUT TO:

17 **EXT. PUEBLO STREET - DAY** 17

Sands walks alongside a pueblo street. Talking on his world phone.

SANDS
I'm just walking my beat, friend. Mexico's my beat, and I'm walking it. I set em up, I watch em fall. Have him meet me at the bullfight at five. Over and out.

He sees an INTERNET CAFE and crosses the street. A small CLING CLING bike bell sounds and a little boy with a box of chicle (gum) rides up.

CHICLE BOY
Chicle?

Sands gives the kid a look.

SANDS
Bubble gum?

The boy shakes his head.

CHICLE BOY
BREATH gum.

SANDS
Oh, I guess I could use that.

The boy nods. Sands digs in his pocket and pulls out a 10 dollar bill. He digs out a handful of gum from the box and shoves them in his pocket.

SANDS
This should hold the both of us over for a long time. Now beat it.

The boy takes the ten, smiles, CLING CLINGS the bell, and rides off.

18 **INT - INTERNET CAFE - DAY** 18

Sands takes a cup of coffee and checks an E-mail at an internet station. He reads and sips. He types in a return message and hits send. Then shuts off the machine and walks out.

CUT TO:

18 **EXT. RESTAURANT - CIA AND FBI LUNCH - DAY** 18

Sands is sitting across from Jorge Ramirez, a retired FBI agent.

SANDS
The CIA sharing a meal with the FBI. Now if that isn't inter-agency cooperation I don't know what is.

FBI
I'm *Retired* FBI.

SANDS
A real agent never retires. He just takes it a little easier.

FBI
Why are we talking.

SANDS
You tracked down Amando Barrillo for two years when he ran operations out of San Antonio.

FBI
Spinning wheels. Never lead to an arrest.

The food arrives. Puerco Pilbirl and a tequila and lime.

SANDS
Well... He's sitting right behind you.

FBI smiles. We can see Barrillo having lunch behind him at a distance. FBI doesn't turn around.

FBI
I know. He settled back in. He's been living here the past 6 years. Can't be touched.

SANDS
You know, most Agents never even see a top ten criminal in their entire careers. You brought down two, didn't you?

Jorge Ramirez nods humbly.

SANDS
And your third is sitting in the same room. Retired or not, that's gotta bite like a bitch.

FBI
I'm a civilian now.

SANDS
He killed that agent friend of yours, didn't he? Archuleta, right?

FBI
As a Mexican Citizen, we can't extradite him for crimes committed in the US. He's protected by Mexico. We'd have to lure him out into international waters, catch him in the act of ..

SANDS
Now you're thinking...

FBI
You're wasting your time. I'm out. Things like this are no longer my concern.

SANDS
Did you know of a Doctor Guevera... worked for the Cartel. This doctor pumped your friend Archuleta full of drugs, day after day, so that they could torture him for 2 weeks before he died? Well, of course you knew that.

Sands points with his eyes. Jorge Ramirez glances over. Sitting eating dinner with Barrillo is Dr. Guevera.

SANDS
Doctor Guevera himself. Having dinner with your prey. What are they up to now I wonder? 2 weeks of torture, Jorge. Think about that. For your dead friend... and for the job you didn't finish in San Antonio. Barrillo's right here. Are you really going to let it slip away again?

Sands Stands. Passing a cell phone over to Ramirez.

SANDS
Try the pilbirl, it's excellent..

Ramirez watches Sands leave. He takes a bite of the pilbirl. Lifts his silver glass and drinks from it. As he slowly lowers it he examines the reflection of Barrillo and Dr. Guevera.

CUT TO:

19 INT. CLUB MARIACHI -NIGHT 19

Close on a woman, sitting wide eyed, surrounded by her friends. All looking offscreen at someone approaching. A hot Latin ballad is playing, dark club atmosphere.

A face enters screen left. A mariachi singer, LORENZO, leans in close to the woman as he sings the up-tempo ballad. Passionate. Nearing her. He caresses her face. Kisses her deeply. Lovingly.

The song ends.

Her friends whoop and pat her back. They dig into their handbags and pass cash to Lorenzo the mariachi. He takes the cash, but all the while his eyes are LOCKED on the woman. She is mesmerized. So is he it seems. He turns slowly and begins to walk away as the girls CHEER.

A few steps is all it takes for him to forget she even exists. He walks away now, eyes on the money. Counting it. The passion in his eyes now gone. He was punching the clock, alright. Nice act. Ballad man for Hire. What a cool club.

Suddenly someone snatches his cash from his hands. He looks up.

It's EL.

Lorenzo hugs Mariachi. Reunion. Long time it seems.

LORENZO
(Where the hell have you been?)

MARIACHI
(Far away. Knew where to find you. Still peddling?)

Lorenzo snatches his money back.

LORENZO
Wait here. There's someone else you know.

MARIACHI
Who? Fideo? He still alive?

LORENZO
Barely. Wait here.

Lorenzo, all genuine smiles, walks off.

Mariachi surveys the fancy club. Up on a stage is a golden woman. Dancing. Painted like a golden Aztec goddess. Mesmerizing.

20 INT. CLUB - CLOSE ON MARIACHI - NIGHT 20

We see what 'he' sees... The woman now looks like Carolina. Painted in Gold. She dances only for him.

We see how it affects him. She beckons him. Only now she's not gold... She's covered in RED. He snaps himself awake.

FIDEO
De... Colores...

An out of tune and out of touch mariachi player grabs Mariachi's lapel. This drunkard is FIDEO, the third mariachi of their old group. They laugh. Lorenzo is holding Fideo up.

MARIACHI
Still drinking I see.

FIDEO
Like a fish.

Fideo falls over. Out.

MARIACHI
He hasn't changed.

Lorenzo sits the half conscious Fideo up on a chair and fashions the guitar on his lap so he looks like he's playing a tune. Hunched over the guitar, focused... Lost in the music. It works.

LORENZO
His last night. They're firing him. Probably send me along with him. Tell me you're here with some 'trabajo'. Cause we need it. For old times sake.

Mariachi smiles.

MARIACHI
I'm here for my guitar.

Lorenzo's not sure if this is good news or bad.

21 INT. ANOTHER ROOM - NIGHT 21

Lorenzo whips off an old cloth, unveiling a guitar case, laying flat on it's side.

LORENZO
Didn't think you'd ever come back for this thing.

MARIACHI
Neither did I.

Mariachi runs his hand across it.

LORENZO
Are we on?

MARIACHI
I'll let you know.

Mariachi takes the case. We can tell it's heavy by the way he lifts it.

CUT TO:

22 **EXT. BULLFIGHT RING - DAY** 22

Standing above in the special BOX section of the BULLFIGHT ARENA is Sands and Cucuy, talking to a younger man in a slick suit. Cucuy is watching the game intently.

SANDS
Sometimes a revolution is just what's needed to sort of clean up the system. One giant enema. So I shake em up, I move on.

The Kid tries to follow the big boy's game. He keeps straightening his tie.

SANDS
You want to know the secret to winning? Creative Sportsmanship. In other words...

Sands nods to Cucuy. Cucuy hits a button on a remote switch.

On the field the Bullfighter's belt lets off a hot electric charge for a moment. Nothing noticeable to people in the stands, but his face goes purple and he's short of breath. He can't hardly move. And right now he needs to move. The bull charges. The Bullfighter is gored.

SANDS
You gotta rig the game.

The young man is horrified. The crowd shrieks. Sands nods to Cucuy.

SANDS
Collect.

Cucuy is collecting loads of cash from other horrified participants in the booth as Sands and the Young Man exit.

23 EXT. OUTSIDE THE RING - DAY 23

YOUNG MAN
El Presidente is giving a speech on the Day of the Dead... to the town of Tlaxcala.

SANDS
I know.

YOUNG MAN
He'll be isolated inside the main Edificio in the middle of the plaza. Easy access to him if someone can get you in.

SANDS
And you're the one who can do it?

Young Man nods. Sands is handed a load of cash from Cucuy. Sands hands it to the Young Man.

SANDS
The rest upon completion.

CUT TO:

24 INT. MARIACHI HOTEL - FLASHBACK #2 - DAY 24

Mariachi gets a hotel room. He looks out the window. Surveys his view. Rips the phone line from the wall. He looks over at his guitar case.

25 EXT. MARIACHI TOWN - FLASHBACK - DAY 25

- Flashback to a wedding ceremony in the town from the beginning. Alvaro is saying the service. Mariachi and Carolina are still wearing the handcuffs. They kiss.

Mariachi runs his hand over the guitar case again. Unlatches the first latch.

-FLASH: We SEE Carolina's smile.

Wind blows through the window as he opens another latch.

-FLASH: A strand of her hair passing in front of his face.

He contemplates. Then opens the last latch.

-FLASH: Candles burning. Romantic evening.

CAROLINA
Que quires en tu vida?

He kisses her lips.

The guitar case opens. There is a guitar inside. But as you may have guessed, there is something more.

-FLASH: He kisses her neck. Lower... Between her covered breasts. Her robe begins to slide open as he kisses lower and lower to...

...the swell of her abdomen. She's with child. He caresses her stomach, and the baby inside. He looks up at her glowing face. She smiles at him. She is beautiful. He's at peace.

The Fake guitar top opens, revealing weapons of war beneath it. He has tears in his eyes. From remembering the past, and realizing the inevitable future.

He slams the case shut.

CUT TO:

26 **INT. FBI APARTMENT - DAY** 26

Retired FBI agent Jorge Ramirez, from the earlier dinner with CIA agent Sands, is digging through an old sock drawer. He uncovers an old reel to reel mini tape recorder. He finds an old box with a microphone inside. He connects the mic. Sticks it to his lapel. Presses record. He drops it in his coat pocket.

FBI
Testing, testing one two.

He replays it. Perfectly acceptable.

On the dresser is a glass encased FBI bag and service pistol. A memento from the agency. The badge has the words INVALID stamped across it in red. Jorge takes the encasement and drops it to the floor, smashing the case open.

27 **INT. RESTAURANT - DAY** 27

While sipping coffee, and eating pilbirl, Jorge uses LIQUID PAPER to paint over the INVALID stamp on his badge. He also uses an exacto knife to scrape away what he can. A black pen helps fill in the scrapes.

28 **INT. BATHROOM - DAY** 28

He is standing in front of a filthy mirror in a filthier bathroom. He looks around, no one is there. He WHIPS out his badge. Flashing it to himself in the mirror. He mouths the words 'FBI! DON'T MOVE!"

Again he looks around. He tries it again. Squints to see if he can tell the badge has been doctored. He moves the badge from side to side slightly, to see if that by using slight of hand it becomes less noticeable. If someone were watching, they'd be laughing

29 **EXT. STREET - DAY** 29

Jorge is standing on a street corner. Watching with a newspaper in his hands. We see Barrillo, the cartel man, and GUEVERA, the doctor, along with their extensive cartel entourage exit a hospital building. Jorge watches them enter their classy armored cars and drive off. He speaks into the microphone attached to his lapel, noting street location and the time that his watch has.

CUT TO:

30 **INT PACO LOCO RESTAURANT - SANDS AND BELINI - DAY** 30

CIA agent Sands is sitting in the restaurant we saw him in the opening scene, the Pato Loco. He is sitting in the same body position, with his now familiar FAKE ARM setup. The Fork in one hand, his drink in the other. His dinner partner is once again BELINI from the opening scene. We've joined them mid-meal. Sands looks impatient.

SANDS
Belini, we've done business together a long time. I've got the utmost respect for you. But enough fucking around.

Belini drinks his coffee slowly. Relishing the moment.

SANDS
Do you have the information on Barrillo, or do you not?

BELINI
I have it. I'm just enjoying this temporary position of power. I make you nervous?

SANDS
Withholding vital information from a federal officer is an offense. Especially when that officer has paid handsomely for it.

BELINI
(under his breath)
So shoot me.

The waitress comes over with some coffee.

WAITRESS
(More coffee?)

She lifts Sands coffee mug.

SANDS
Not for me, maybe for him.

WAITRESS
(Oh.)

She tries to put his cup down too quickly and spills the coffee from the pot all over Sands 'arm.'

WAITRESS
(Oh my god. I'm so sorry.)

BELINI
Ouch.

Sands doesn't move.

WAITRESS
(Did I burn you?!)

SANDS
I'm fine. Just go away.

WAITRESS
(Jesus.)

She grabs a towel to clean him up. Belini is only mildly amused.

SANDS
You're off the hook, now leave me alone.

She starts patting the 'arm' with a towel.

WAITRESS
(You've got to be in pain. That's scorching hot.)

SANDS
(I said leave me alone.)

Belini doesn't find this situation odd, but he is a little quiet.

Sands realizes it's a matter of time before that arm becomes unattached or... She does it. We hear a small POP and the arm begins to deflate.

Sands just shakes his head.

SANDS
You know lady, that spill just cost you your life.

<POFF> < POFF> < POFF> goes the Silencer beneath the table. BELINI reacts violently to the three gut shots. Sands stands and fires another through his heart and gives one to the waitress without even looking at her. She falls out of frame making a loud crash with her coffee pot.

Sands walks over to BELINI and starts searching his pockets. People around the restaurant are turning to see if the waitress will ever get up. A woman screams when she sees blood.

Sands searches, finds nothing. He's out of time here. He grabs the dead Belini and heaves him over his shoulder. Carries him out.

Drops him into the trunk of his car and drives away.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. RIVER - DAY 31

Sands is standing at the river. Wide establishing. Belini's body is on the ground. Sands has searched every pocket, every nook and hiding place he can think of. Well almost. He lights a cigarette. He knows the next step.

SANDS
Time to get messy.

He exhales, then stops. He looks at the eye patch for a moment. Of course. He removes Belini's patch. Stuffed in the empty eye socket is a plastic pouch.

SANDS
Well, Belini...

Sands pulls it out. It's bigger than you think. If it weren't for the eye, a human socket could hold quite a bit of stuff.

SANDS
(examining bounty)
I guess I should thank you for not sticking it up your ass.

He pushes the body into the water and watches it float away...

CUT TO:

32 **INT. AJEDREZ'S APARTMENT - DAY** 32

Ajedrez, The Female Federale agent from the earlier scene at Federale headquarters, is sitting in front of a vanity in her apartment. We hear a KEY in the lock of her apartment door. Loud. Fumbling. Working it. Can't get in.

Ajedrez was fixing her hair in the mirror. Now she's put down her brush and picked up her gun. She looks outside the window to see any recognizable cars. Nothing.

WHAM! The door is kicked in. SANDS enters the apartment.

AJEDREZ
(leveling the gun at him)
You're gonna pay for that, cop.

SANDS
Why doesn't my key work anymore?

AJEDREZ
It's too small.

Sands almost smiles. Ajedrez can't hold it in, and laughs. He walks towards her.

Ajedrez spins a silencer to the front of the gun. < POFF!> She fires a cap off near his feet.

AJEDREZ
Stand back. I'm still mad at you.

SANDS
I brought you a gift.

He holds up the PAPERS he took from the EYELESS MAN.

SANDS
Wasn't easy to get.

He tosses it to her. She feels the moistness.

AJEDREZ
You pull this out of someone's ass?

SANDS
(tapping near temple)
Someone's eye.

She opens it and reads.

AJEDREZ
(reading)
Come closer and I'll thank you.

He moves in slowly. POFF! Another cap fires off. This one was closer.

SANDS
Enough.

AJEDREZ
Closer I said.

Sands moves slowly. Sits across from her. Her gun re-aims. For his groin.

AJEDREZ
You get closer, or I'll get closer.

Her gun moves up to his face. Sands looks into her eyes. She's beautiful, and well... obviously dangerous.

SANDS
How about that tip off? Guarantees you a big arrest and an accommodation. Even from your twisted agency.

AJEDREZ
I'm impressed. But then what.

SANDS
Then you quit. Run off with me.

AJEDREZ
I need my job.

He gets even closer. The gun near his chin. He's relaxed, though.

SANDS
You say that now, token female agent you so obviously are.

She reacts. Knows it's true.

SANDS
Still like your job?

AJEDREZ
I love it.

SANDS
Well, let me tell you why I hate mine. I set em up. And I watch em fall. And that's it.

She has the gun feathering itself up his nose to his eye. He talks as if it's not even there.

SANDS
I do... unspeakable things for a thankless government. So here's the plan. Wanna hear it?

AJEDREZ
Either that or I start target practice.

33 EXT. COUP TOWN WITH CHAVEZ - DAY 33

This is a PLAN sequence. Almost like a dream sequence cause it describes some events that haven't yet taken place, yet we SEE them taking place in the ideal way that Sands would like to see the events turn out. This is not foreshadowing or a FlashForward. It is how he thinks it'll go. (and it will go NOTHING like this.)

SANDS
The new President is on a quest to clear out the Barrillo Cartel. Barrillo has set up a counter attack, by hiring a military general named Marquez to throw a coup de etat while the President visits Tlaxcala.

We see Marquez preparing troops.

SANDS
I've got a man on the inside. As insurance. To make sure Marquez never takes power. The last piece of the puzzle is Barrillo. Your tip-off assures Barrillo is out of the picture while the battle ensues. And in the aftermath... of this very healthy revolution... I walk out with the 20 million pesos Barrillo is paying Marquez for the coup. Which is about a million dollars or so, depending on how quick I cash it in.

We actually SEE Sands receiving the money and handing a stack of bills over to AJEDREZ, who is all too happy to take it.

SANDS
You know, that thing would be more threatening if it still had ammo.

Ajedrez puts the gun aside.

AJEDREZ
That plan will never work.

SANDS
Of course it won't. It's a shake-up. A series of orchestrated events leading to mass chaos, allowing a man like me to run off with the loot.

AJEDREZ
So you hate your job and you want out. Someone else's payoff is the answer to your dreams. And you want me to go with you.

SANDS
I know I'm talking to the last honest cop in Mexico... but we're both fighting the losing battle. I want to be on the upside just once. And yes. I want you to go with me.

AJEDREZ
Estas loco.

Sands leans in... holds Ajedrez's head close. Almost eye to eye.

SANDS
You can detain Barrillo with the information you have. Then join me and share the spoils.

She kisses him.

AJEDREZ
I love you.

SANDS
Meet me two nights from now, at Guadarjil... 10pm sharp. Bring only what's important to you.

She thinks about that. He stops near the door.

SANDS
It might get a little dangerous...
(smiling)
But, you can handle yourself can't you?

He isn't even halfway through his sentence when Ajedrez ejects the empty gun clip and slaps in another, cocks the gun, aims...

Sands is flying out the door. It slams behind him.

She smiles.

CUT TO:

34 INT. PRESIDENTE OFFICE IN TLAXCALA - DAY 34

EL PRESIDENTE is in an OVAL OFFICE, temporary digs... He's in TLAXCALA. The state of BARRILLO. The state where the COUP will take place. Presidente is giving a televised speech. A small camera crew is set up.

EL PRESIDENTE
(in Spanish, this is a speech stating his purpose to his week long visit to TLAXCALA, and for his call to peace.)

CUT TO:

El Presidente stares out the window in this Tlaxcala government fortress. Looking out on the people below.

ADVISOR
Presidente... How can you compete against a man like Barrillo. Why even try? He OWNS Tlaxcala.

PRESIDENTE
He doesn't own it's people.

The YOUNG MAN from the bullfight steps up to the President. (We don't see his face yet.)

MIGUEL
Presidente, Barrillo has purchased hundreds of homes and ranches in the northern region of Tlaxcala. He has turned around and given these homes to the people. He is a folk hero.

PRESIDENTE
He is also a mass murderer, and a drug kingpin. He is trying to make himself a martyr by drawing the people to his side. The people can see through that.

The Advisor steps forward with a surveillance foto of Barrillo.

ADVISOR
When you have someone like Barrillo, who rises from poverty, and through any means necessary goes on to achieve great wealth and power... The lines blur. To the people of this state Barrillo's and others like him are heroes. The people overlook the means and look only at the result.

PRESIDENTE
I want all corridos and folk songs glorifying Barrillo to be banned. I want Barrillo publicly humiliated and shown for the murderous thief he is. We need to create a campaign of our own, so when he is captured and tried, there will be no resistance. I believe my people will stand up for what is right.

El Presidente steps away from the window. Miguel turns around, we recognize him as the Young Man from the Bullfight who is helping Sands get into the fortress.

MIGUEL
They are no longer your people.

EL PRESIDENTE
Then I will die fighting. I will not turn the blind eye. And I need you all with me to do it. Are you with me?

They all resist, then nod. Miguel nods last.

CUT TO:

35 INT. HOSPITAL - JORGE INVESTIGATES - DAY 35

Retired FBI agent Jorge Ramirez walks through the hospital he was scoping out earlier. He goes up to a HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR.

FBI
Hello, can you help me?

He pulls out his badge.

FBI
I'm with the FBI of the United States and I have a few small questions.

She looks at the badge. He's doing his sleight of hand floaty trick. Slightly. Just enough that we notice it. The administrator doesn't really.

ADMINISTRATOR
(unimpressed)
(Why should I care?)

FBI
There is a Doctor Guevera, making arrangements for a surgery sometime... soon? Dr. Guevera is wanted by the FBI, and is without license. He should not be practicing medicine in a hospital.

Jorge is looking over documents and files behind the administrator now. But we still hear his voice from their earlier conversation. He makes small marks on the paperwork.

FBI
None of this is your concern, however, I'm only informing you of that fact so you'd have good reason to share any information your hospital would have on such illegal activities.

He finds what he's looking for. Turns back to her. She looks a little nervous.

FBI
Can I copy these?

CUT TO:

36 **EXT. BUILDING - SANDS ON ROOFTOP - DAY** 36

Sands is climbing a fire escape ladder up to a rooftop for better phone reception.

SANDS
Can you hear me, now? Where are you? Did you assemble your team?

37 INT. MARIACHI'S HOTEL ROOM - SAME 37

We cut to Mariachi in his hotel room. By the window. Guns are all laid out on the bed. In various states of cleaning.

MARIACHI
You know I did.

Mariachi is looking down at the street. CUCUY is down there.

MARIACHI
Why are you having me followed?

SANDS
A guarantee of compliance. Cucuy also provides protection.

Mariachi aims a sniper pistol at Cucuy. Who is oblivious.

MARIACHI
From what? Mosquitoes? He's not a professional.

SANDS
I have your next assignment.

38 EXT. FORTRESS - DAY 38

Young Man goes downstairs and opens the back entrance.

YOUNG MAN
You are the Mariachis?

We see a shot of the three of them. Like the three caballeros. They are holding their guitars, except for Lorenzo, who has his in a case.

MARIACHI
Yes.

39 INT. FORTRESS -DAY 39

Inside the Fortress they are escorted through the back way.

YOUNG MAN
(quieter, to Mariachi)
This is the back entrance to the Presidential Fortress. Make note of it.

Another guard appears. Stops them all.

GUARD
(Who are they?)

YOUNG MAN
(The entertainers.)

The Guard lifts Lorenzo's case.

GUARD
(Why is it so heavy?)

LORENZO
(Has built in amplification.)

The Guard looks them over.

GUARD
(Play.)

The Young Man looks a little nervous. Mariachi breaks the ice.

MARIACHI
It's okay.

They pull out their guitars. Start playing some cheesy mariachi standard. The Guard has heard enough. Waves them down.

GUARD
(Enough. Go entertain.)

The Young Man is relieved. They take their instruments and continue on.

YOUNG MAN
I was afraid you couldn't play.

MARIACHI
One always needs a skill to fall back on.

CUT TO:

40 INT. PRESIDENT OFFICE - PRESIDENTIAL GIG - DAY 40

We are in the OVAL PRESIDENT's temporary office in Tlaxcala. There are small tables around. A small get together between different important political figures The President is here. Small appetizers are served.

The Mariachi's are in a corner... playing 'Flor De Mal.' Sure enough, Lorenzo is amplified a bit through his guitar case. Like an old Silvertone job.

Mariachi starts doing his walk around. He plays from table to table... Looking around. Scoping out the joint when no one's looking. They're never looking. Mariachis have a tendency to fade into the background.

He stands right behind El Presidente. Hears something the El Presidente is saying. The music stops.

MARIACHI
(Would you like to make a request, Presidente?)

El Presidente turns to him.

PRESIDENTE
La Malaguena.

The President looks over Mariachi briefly, then returns to his conversation. Young man looks on.

Mariachi begins playing La Malaguena. The song from the opening Credits. He walks away, playing.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. FORTRESS - DAY 41

The three Mariachis exit with their payment in hand. A hundred pesos. Lorenzo and Fideo are fingering their payment.

LORENZO
We just played for El Presidente.

FIDEO
I can't buy half a tequila with this.

MARIACHI
It was meant as an honor.

LORENZO
Fuck honor, we need money.

Mariachi is deep in thought. The camera pushes in on him slowly.

MARIACHI
(That wasn't the score.)

The boys listen up.

MARIACHI
(Tomorrow. Are you in?)

Lorenzo and Fideo look to each other. They shrug a "Sure."

MARIACHI
I'll contact you. Go practice.

LORENZO
For playing? Or shooting.

MARIACHI
What do you think?

Lorenzo nods. He and Fideo leave.

CUT TO:

42 **EXT. TOWN ASSIGNMENT#2 – DAY** 42

Mariachi is being followed by Cucuy...

He speeds up. Goes through the MARKET area. Cucuy has him in his sight path, but soon loses him. Cucuy runs.

Mariachi is pushing through hanging SERAPES. Finally he tears one down, taking it with him.

Cucuy comes through the same area. Looks around frantically.

Mariachi is gone.

Cucuy scurries about. It's a madhouse. He calls into his walkie/phone, and continues searching.

Cucuy runs behind a man in a bandanna and a SERAPE. Cucuy is trying to get around him.

CUCUY
(pushing the man aside)
Vete, Conio...

The Seraped Man swings out his arm, knocking Cucuy out cold with an ugly 'fist to face.'

Serape, Mariachi in disguise, drags Cucuy into a side alley.

Outside the market, a truck drives up, with other armed men.

CUT TO:

43 **EXT. STREETS - MARIACHI PONCHO SHOOTOUT - DAY** 43

Gunfire erupts. The Armed men don't know where it's coming from. People in the street begin to scatter. The Armed men look to the high buildings around them and search out snipers.

Others simply panic and open fire on the surrounding buildings.

We finally SEE who is doing the damage. The Mariachi is in the street wearing the serape / poncho, big. It covers his arms completely. No one can tell who's shooting because the guns are hidden under his poncho.

He looks like he's merely walking but he is shooting through his serape. (see illustration. Very cool.)

When the armed men realize it's coming from Serape Man they open fire but he's already taken out a big contingency of their men. As he turns to run, bullets shoot out of his back, (his guns are turned to face back under the serape.)

Mariachi ducks into hiding. The men disembark their ship and gather around the dark corner to which the Mariachi disappeared. The men grow closer. A dead end no doubt.

They hear GUNSHOTS and back up. Out runs the Mariachi in his serape, crashing into things! The surviving gang opens fire on him, riddling him instantly and stopping him in his tracks.

He falls to his knees as the Armed men drive past to finish him off. From the safety of their vehicle, the men open fire, and even run over Mariachi a bit. They unload into him. They speed off when they are sure he's dead.

Children run up to the corpse and turn it over. We see the face. It is CUCUY, hands tied beneath the serape. After the men are long gone, out from the alley emerges the Mariachi.

He takes Cucuy's cell phone.

CUT TO:

44 **EXT. GUANAJUATO STREETS - MOTORCYCLE CHASE - DAY** 44

High speed chase through streets between Mariachi and the CARTEL baddies that spot him and give chase. Lots of damage. Wild stunts. Very exciting. Details to follow.

CUT TO:

45 **EXT. BARRILLO'S HACIENDA - DAY** 45

Exterior shot of the grand Hacienda we saw earlier. Only now, beautiful piano music emanates. We dissolve inside to fingers dancing effortlessly across the keys. We hear a man's voice.

TEACHER
(You must loosen your fingers to play. It must flow effortlessly from your soul. Music is pure. If your soul is pure, it will be effortless.)

The teacher stands, revealing that it was he playing all along. Barrillo is standing beside the piano, only watching. The teacher motions for Barrillo to try. Barrillo sits down. Starts to play. Ouch. It hurts.

BARRILLO
(And if one's soul is not pure?)

TEACHER
(laughs slightly)
(Then he must practice like a motherfucker.)

Barrillo is not amused. He stops playing.

We hear a throat clearing. We see Billy Chambers, his chihuahua dog behind his back, standing at the door with MARQUEZ, the military man from Mariachi's flashbacks.

BILLY
I present to you, General Marquez.

Barrillo stands shakes the Teachers hand, then turns to Billy Chambers.

BARRILLO
(re: Piano Teacher)
Get this condescending ass out of here.

Billy escorts the teacher out.

BILLY
You want me to break his fingers?

BARRILLO
No. I want you to chop them off.

Billy stops.

BILLY
I was joking.

Barrillo levels with him.

BARRILLO
I wasn't.

Billy escorts the Teacher out.

BARRILLO
Gracias Maestro!

The teacher waves back and bows, not aware of the words that were exchanged in English about him.

BARRILLO
Sit, please.

MARQUEZ
I prefer to stand.

Barrillo nods and sits.

BARRILLO
Your men?

MARQUEZ
Ready to do whatever it takes to succeed...

Barrillo nods.

MARQUEZ
And my payment?

BARRILLO
It will be waiting for you inside the Presidential Stronghold.

MARQUEZ
I don't want the responsibilities of running a dictatorship.

BARRILLO
You won't have to. Get rid of the President, and leave. I'll handle the rest.

MARQUEZ
How?

Barrillo smiles.

BARRILLO
(Trust me.)

CUT TO:

46 **EXT. SANDS TOWN - FBI PHONE CALL - DAY** 46

CIA agent SANDS' phone rings. He picks it up.

FBI
I've been following Barrillo and the good Dr. Guevera.

SANDS
Agent Ramirez? No longer retired. Good man.

FBI
I have not spotted any illegal activities, other than the fact that Guevera is scheduled for a surgery procedure, or the overseeing of a surgery procedure on November 1st.

Sands checks his watch for a date.

SANDS
The Day of the Dead. That's tomorrow.

FBI
I have also recognized one member of their group as Billy Chambers. A fugitive, we've been wanting to pick him up for some time.

JORGE is scoping out Barrillo's group from afar.

SANDS
Billy Chambers? You sure?

Billy Chambers is among them.

FBI
I'd put my badge on it.

SANDS
Your expired badge? Good for you. Barrillo may be making a switch. Doubtful you'll get much of a lead, but it's worth trying to see what the extent of that operation is. You're a good man, Jorge. Thanks for doing this.

FBI
I'm not doing it for you. I just wanted to let you know what I found out... in case something happened to me.

Jorge clicks off his phone. Sands looks at his. Smart ass.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. STREET - FBI AND BILLY CHAMBERS - DAY 47

FBI agent Jorge Ramirez is on the street tailing Billy Chambers, Barrillo's Anglo bodyguard, who is buying a taco off a street TACO CART. He buys some extra scrap for his ever present CHIHUAHUA.

FBI
Billy Chambers?

BILLY
Yeah.

FBI
I thought that was you. Here let me pay for that.

Jorge pays the TACO MAN using his FBI badge as a wallet.

BILLY
Thanks.

Billy notices the FBI BADGE. Jorge leaves it open just long enough for Billy to register what it is, then he closes it. Billy lets out a small gasp of surprise.

Jorge locks eyes with him. Jorge has kind eyes, unintimidating. Which is actually very right for the job.

BILLY
(relieved)
I'm ready.

They walk towards a church and step inside. Both looking around suspiciously before entering. Once inside they see the priest and the priest's servants still repairing the damage from the earlier shootout.

BILLY
Look.

Billy pulls out 150 pesos. He speaks as if a huge weight has been lifted from his shoulders.

BILLY
That was it. All I have left. I've been hiding here in Mexico now, 8 years. I've been working for the cartel the last 4.
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
This is all I have to show for it. They give me nothing. They know I have nowhere else to go. They feed me and give me a place to live, but I make no money. I can never leave. I'm indebted to them. Take me back. I'm ready. I will not resist.

Jorge shakes Billy's hand.

FBI
Jorge Ramirez. I'll take you in under the FBI's protection until we can get you back to the states where you'll be prosecuted for your crimes committed in the US.

BILLY
Which were minimal in comparison. I'm so ready to go I can't tell you. The things I've had to do for Barrillo and the cartel... are unspeakable.

FBI
I need some information from you first, and you have to stay with them one more day before I can take you in, can you help me?

BILLY
Anything. Just get me the hell out.

Jorge smiles.

CUT TO:

48 **EXT. SANDS TOWN PLAZA - DAY** 48

Sands is examining a surveillance foto of damage done by the Mariachi. The bodies from a slaughter.

SANDS
(Who?)

RIGHT HAND MAN
(No one knows...)

SANDS
What the fuck time is it?

Sands looks at his watch. He calls Cucuy.

49 **EXT. STREET - MARIACHI ANSWERS - SAME** 49

MARIACHI
Oui.

SANDS
Who is this?

MARIACHI
Who do you think?

SANDS
What happened to Cucuy.

MARIACHI
There's been a change of plans, my friend.

Mariachi hangs up.

CUT TO:

50 **EXT. REMOTE LOCATION - MARIACHIS - DAY** 50

In a remote location, Lorenzo is taking a flask away from Fideo. He empties the flask into the ground.

LORENZO
Practice SHOOTING, not drinking.

Fideo looks devastated as Lorenzo answers the phone.

LORENZO
Bueno.

MARIACHI
We're on.

LORENZO
About time.

Lorenzo sees that Fideo is on the ground, sucking up dirt and booze. Lorenzo kicks Fideo.

CUT TO:

51 INT - SURGICAL WARD - HOSPITAL DAY 51

Barrillo is in a surgical room. Dr. Guevera is there with two other doctors.

MARQUEZ
Don't put me out completely.

Dr. Guevera stabs Barrillo with an anesthesia.

MARQUEZ
Have my men wait outside.

Dr. Guevera waves to the guards. They all step outside.

Dissolves between images of preparations for the surgery.

The lights are brought in. Instruments laid out. Front and profile fotos of MARQUEZ are placed on the wall.

Dr. Guevera leans over Barrillo who stares glassy eyed at the ceiling. He makes his first move while eyeing the foto of Marquez: A long, deep cut.

CUT TO:

52 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY 52

Ex- FBI agent Jorge Ramirez wakes.

He was sitting in a coffee shop. Asleep with his head on the table. It is morning now. He looks outside the window to the hospital across the street.

He sees the cartel men/bodyguards crossing the street. He checks his watch, and narrates into his tape recorder.

FBI
Dr. Guevera and Senor Barrillo must already be inside, having entered through the back or basement. They should be mid-procedure right about now. Another hour, and I should move in for a closer look...

He trails off at the next sight. Federale agents filter into the hospital.

FBI
Federale agents.

He sees a few more baddies run inside after the agents go in.

FBI
This is going down now.

53 **INT. HOSPITAL - SAME** 53

He grabs a gun out of his lapel and holds it down at his side. He runs in and takes the elevator up to the 8th floor.

Just before he reaches the 8th floor he rethinks his move. He hits the button for the 7TH FLOOR. He gets out, finds a stairwell exit and takes the stairs up to the 8th floor.

He hears voices above. Peaking around the stairs, he sees that two Henchmen are blocking the stairwell entrance to the 8th. He hangs back. Checks his watch. Is about to leave, when he hears SCREAMING AND YELLING.

The Henchmen run inside the hall of the 8th floor. Jorge leaps to the top of the stairs and slowly sneaks into the 8th floor ward.

He sees a ruckus going on in Barrillo's surgery room. He stands out of the way, peeking over shoulders to get a glimpse.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. Nurses run out and are GUNNED DOWN by Cartel hitmen.

THREE DOCTORS, including Dr. Guevera, are lined up against the wall of the operating room. For there, laid out on the table, is the lifeless corpse of a CARVED Barrillo, his face completely open in MID- PLASTIC SURGERY. The heart monitor is flatline.

Dr. GUEVERA knows the next step will be retaliation from the Cartel. They will surely blame the doctors for the loss of their important patient. Dr. Guevera leaps out the nearby window, crashing hard below onto a fire escape.

The Cartel OPENS fire on him for rubbing out their boss. The two doctors that are left are efficiently MOWED DOWN. A few cartel members circle Barrillo's body. Checking for body signals or any vital signs. Nothing. He's dead alright. Most of the room head for the elevators, others climb out the fire escape.

Jorge Ramirez enters the room and examines the body. The face is peeled back, surgical instruments are either spread around the table or keeping Barrillo's facial flaps held in place. Into his tape-recorder, Jorge whispers...

FBI
If Barrillo wanted to look unrecognizable to authorities... He succeeded.

He then sees the foto of Marquez up on the Wall.

He watches the Cartel chase down Guevera. Guevera makes a fast get away in his car. Jorge turns to check out the Barrillo's body more closely.

FBI
Massive tissue loss from an only partially completed facial reconstruction wasn't necessarily the cause of death.

He hears a metal CLANG, and sees something roll across the floor. He leans down. It's a RING. He lifts up the ring, and then looks at Barrillo's heavily ringed hand.

JORGE
Heart failure due to the depth of anesthesia is a more likely cause.

He touches the rings on the hand, and notices they spin easily. He shakes the hand, and the rings slide right off the fingers. They all clang musically and in slo motion on the floor. That is all we hear.

JORGE
They switched bodies...

He stands and in slo motion... rushes back out into the hallway, is about to take the elevator but decides to take the stairs. He looks down the stairwell, then up. He runs UP. He hears the sound of a CHOPPER growing louder.

54 INT. HOSPITAL - NINTH FLOOR - SAME 54

Up and up, round and round. He enters the 9th floor and turns out of the door and runs FACE to FACE with a BANDAGED MAN tied upright to a leaning stretcher. His eyes swollen and wide, his face bandaged beyond recognition.

Jorge is taken aback, for the bandaged man is not completely sedated. His eyes are wide and dilated, shifting menacingly.

Before Jorge can turn and run he is CLOCKED from behind. He falls, revealing she who clocked him. AJEDREZ, Federale agent. She grabs his badge and opens it.

AJEDREZ
Bring him along. He's FBI.

She looks close at the badge. Rubs her finger over the licence. The liquid paper comes off. INACTIVE is revealed.

AJEDREZ
He was, anyway.
(into walkie)
Bring up the cars.

CUT TO:

55 **EXT. SANDS TOWN PLAZA - SANDS ON PHONE - DAY** 55

CIA is walking across a street yelling to someone.

SANDS
You HAVE to do something about it because we've got troops intercepting Marquez's army and there's no time to fuck around. Use all your resources, or everything...

Suddenly, he stops.

SANDS
Hello? Hello?

He listens and clicks the phone. Off. Looks around. Re-dials.

SANDS
You there? I got cut off again.

CUT TO:

56 **EXT. DAY OF THE DEAD PARADE - DAY** 56

A DAY of the DEAD parade is in progress in the streets. Town folk are dressed in ghostly gowns and wear masks of skulls. Faces are painted like skulls. Others are dressed as saints. They carry flowers and hold up banners, honoring the dead.

Others carry huge paper sculpted skulls on poles. This is an extremely visual event.

We see some people carrying bodies of recently deceased overhead in glass display coffins. We notice an eye-patch on one of the bodies. BELINI.

CUT TO:

57 **EXT. COUP DE ETAT STREETS WITH CHAVEZ - DAY** 57

On the outskirts of town a different type of parade is being set up.

Marquez commandeers his troops. Vehicles and guns of every kind litter their parade.

The troops align. The tanks roll.

Note: These scenes will be designed to show the SCOPE of the Coup. To remind us of the bigger picture, which include the mechanizations of such a violent takeover. The Coup in Argentina and Venezuela are the models.

58 **EXT. CLOSED RESTAURANT -DAY** 58

Sands is on the phone with the restaurant he's pacing in front of.

SANDS
I'm standing outside right now. I called, 30 minutes ago and asked for directions. I asked if you'd be open and the guy said yes. Here I am and you're closed. No, he told me you were open. I can hear his unintelligible voice in the background, that's the guy who told me. Well I can't wait till 4pm. I'm meeting someone here right now.

The door opens up behind him. That's more like it..

59 **INT. CLOSED RESTAURANT - SAME** 59

SANDS
Puerco Pilbirl and a tequila with lime.

The waiter runs off to fetch it.

Sands sits down. Places a napkin on his lap. Nervous energy. He picks up his phone. Dials. Hears more clicking. Hangs up. Re-dials a different number.

In the kitchen the cooks are working fast. All dressed in white in this silver lined kitchen. Which makes the DARK SUITS seem the more ominous as they pass in front of the camera. Faces unseen. The cook nods nervously.

Sands is on the phone.

SANDS
I need a new line. This one's been compromised. I don't care, I can hear it. Someone's tapping the shit out of it. Get me a new line now.

A BLACK CLAD SHAPE passes in front of camera and sits across from SANDS, who is so caught up in his phone call he doesn't notice right away.

SANDS
Thank you. I'll be waiting here at the...
(checks menu)
La VACA Volando. Yes, that's right, the flying cow.

He looks up at.... AJEDREZ. Who is sitting across from him. Looking very striking and very lethal. Something different with the hair perhaps? The look on Sands' face is priceless. Medium happy surprise with a twist of confusion.

AJEDREZ
Conio... You really didn't see it coming did you?

Behind him we see a black clad shape move swiftly as they swing the Mexican equivalent of a blackjack at his head.

BLACK OUT.

CUT TO:

60 INT. BACK ROOM - SOMEWHERE DARK AND UNSTERILIZED - AFTERNOON 60

Sands wakes. The first thing he sees is Ajedrez kissing him.

AJEDREZ
Sorry, baby. I told you I wasn't interested in your scheme. Too small.

SANDS
Who are you?

He gets up and sees the bandaged Barrillo.

AJEDREZ
I work for Barrillo.

SANDS
The last honest cop in Mexico.

AJEDREZ
The one good thing about being that is... Everyone confides in you.

SANDS
(re: bandaged man)
Is that Barrillo?

AJEDREZ
That's the new Barrillo. The OLD Barrillo died in surgery a few hours ago.

SANDS
What Cartel would have YOU running an operation.

AJEDREZ
(smiling)
I'm his daughter.

Sands reacts with silence. The bandaged Barrillo steps forward. He puts a needle into his arm. Pain killer.

BARRILLO
You've been spying on my operations for some time.

SANDS
Killing me is crossing the line. You'll have the entire US government down on your ass.

CARTEL
Fortunately for you... Nothing you did was worth dying over.

Dr. Guevera steps forward with an odd, corkscrew type instrument.

CARTEL
You've just seen too much.

The Henchmen around Sands pin him down. He struggles.

CARTEL
We have to make sure that doesn't happen again.

Doctor Guevera, cold and emotionless, leans over Sands.

We cut to black with the sound of screams.

MATCH CUT TO:

61 EXT. COUP STREETS- MARQUEZ AT WAR - DAY 61

One of the GIANT SKULLS on a pole is walked towards camera during the Day of the Dead parade.

Suddenly we hear a CANNON BLAST.

The SKULL EXPLODES, revealing far behind it: A TANK from Marquez's army.

The people in the streets scream and flee for cover. The ARMY rolls through.

Floats are crushed beneath the tank's treads.

Belini's body is dropped during the panic. The glass case shatters and his poor body falls along the street.

CUT TO:

62 INT. PRESIDENT OFFICE - DAY 62

The president reads over his notes for his speech. Rehearsing it...

EL PRESIDENTE
On this Day of the Dead... I offer you a chance for a new life... One free from-

BOOM. He hears a distant CANNON fire. He turns to his ADVISOR.

EL PRESIDENTE
That sounded a little extreme for a parade.

Advisor has his face buried in a phone. Signals the President to hold on.

ADVISOR
Troops coming up from the south.

EL PRESIDENTE
Whose?

ADVISOR
Emiliano Marquez.

EL PRESIDENTE
What do we do?

YOUNG MAN
Stay here, the place is fortified. It will be easier to defend this place then to chance going out in the open.

ADVISOR
We've got access to a northern forces. They can be here in minutes.

CUT TO:

63 **EXT - NORTHERN TROOPS CAMP- DAY** 63

We see a group of northern Tlaxcala troops leaping into action, rushing to their vehicles and arming themselves.

They have a chopper. They're on the move.

CUT TO

64 EXT - BACKROOM - CIA - ON THE MOVE. THE EYELESS SHOOTOUT - DAY 64

CIA agent Sands steps slowly outside of the building where he lost his eyes and was left to suffer. He looks very Mysterious. Brooding. Tired. His coat flowing. Looking half dead. Head hanging low.

We can't see the empty eye-sockets he now sports, for he has SUNGLASSES wrapped around his face. Closer and closer we move to him. We see thin, tear-like streaks of blood running down his face.

He hears the CHING CHING of the chicle boy's bell.

The boy rides up to Sands.

CHICLE BOY
Are you sure you don't need another...

The boy notices the dried blood streaked down Sands face below the eyes. Sands SNAPS out, taking the boy off his bike. Sands digs money from his wallet.

SANDS
I'll give you this... if you'll be my eyes.

The boy looks down at the bill.

CHICLE BOY
It's one dollar.

Sands digs deeper into his pocket. Pulls out a hundred.

SANDS
I meant this.

The boy takes it.

SANDS
Walk me uptown. Towards the center of the city.

The boy guides him. One of the Henchmen is hanging out across the street, eating. Assigned to keep watch, he crosses the street and follows them. Smiling at the pathetic sight.

CHICLE BOY
Someone's following you?

SANDS
Probably. You see them?

CHICLE BOY
One guy. He's getting closer.

Sands pulls out a small gun from somewhere deep inside his pants.

SANDS
Ever see one of these?

Little boy nods. Checks behind them again.

SANDS
Ever use one?

CHICLE BOY
No.

SANDS
Good. Don't ever. They're very very bad.

As he says this he wraps the boy's hand around it.

SANDS
But right now, I need you to aim this at the bad guy following us, and shoot him in the head.

CHICLE BOY
Matalo?

SANDS
Do it or we're both dead.

Sands lifts the boy and holds him over his shoulder so he can get a shot using his shoulder as a rest.

SANDS
Is he close?

CHICLE BOY
Yes.

The Henchman sees the gun in the boy's hand and smiles. He dances slightly from side to side, giving the boy a moving target. Teasing.

The Henchmen takes out his own gun.

CHICLE BOY
I ... Can't.

Sands drops the kid to the ground and holds him down as he snatches the gun away and aims it in the direction of the Henchman. All in one move.

The Henchman is amused, he glides from side to side. Taunting the blind man.

SANDS
Right or left.

The boy is on his back looking at the event with his head tilted.

SANDS
Izqueirda o derecha!

CHICLE BOY
Right. Derecha.

Sands aims slight right and FIRES. Using mostly instinct.

Silence.

Then he realizes something... and looks down at the boy.

SANDS
Was that my right or your right?

CHICLE BOY
(whispered)
My right.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS knocking Sands back. The Henchmen was on the left side hidden in a doorway. He's out now, blasting. Sands shoots back in the direction of the gun sounds.

The little boy is tossed in the corner. Sands stands and fires in every direction. He tries to hear where the Henchman is. But it's difficult... passing cars.

Screaming... He's blind for christ's sake. The Henchman rolls a silencer onto his gun.

Sands hears running footsteps and grabs out, pulling a man up to his gun.

CHICLE BOY
Wrong man.

Sands releases the bystander. Turns. The Henchman is behind him, his gun trained on the boy who is in his grasp.

Sands drops his gun...

The Henchman steps up to Sands and places the Silencer Gun against

Sands' sunglasses.

BOOM! Henchman screams, shot in the BUTT. The boy is holding the smoking gun that Sands had dropped. Henchman hops up and down grabbing his shot butt cheek.. Sands grabs Henchman and shoves him against a doorway. A fight ensues. A gun blast later, Sands returns to the street.

SANDS
Boy?

We see the Chicle boy. Still clutching the gun. Tears streaming down his face. Traumatized. Sands grabs the boy by the back of his neck and takes the gun away.

SANDS
Never use this again.

The crying boy nods.

SANDS
Now get me out of here. Towards the center of the city. If you see a cab, call it.

65 **INT. VACANT WAREHOUSE - FBI CAPTIVITY - DAY** 65

Jorge Ramirez, retired FBI, sits in a near vacant warehouse, strapped to his seat. Ajedrez tosses his badge on his lap and smashes his tape recorder. They're on the move. Two Henchmen stay behind at Ajedrez's order.

Once she's gone, one of the Henchmen aims a gun at FBI's head.

HENCH #1
(What are you doing? She didn't say to kill him.)

Hench #2 puts gun down.

HENCH #2
(She didn't say not to, either.)

HENCH #1
(He's FBI.)

HENCH #2
(Retired. That doesn't count.)

FBI Jorge sits patiently as the two guys decide his fate.

HENCH #1
(I think it still matters. She would have told us to kill him if she wanted him dead.)

HENCH #2
(Hmm. I don't know. I'm hungry.)

HENCH #1
(Well hit him and let's go eat.)

Hench #2 strikes FBI across the face with his gun. FBI is out cold. The two are walking out. We stay on FBI.

Outside. They put on their shades.

HENCH #1
Oye, Blanco Nieve. Mira el cochino, eh? (Hey, snow white. Watch the pig.)

The camera pans over to another henchman, BILLY CHAMBERS, the fugitive. Billy nods and goes inside to watch FBI agent Jorge.

CUT TO:

66 INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE GUITAR FIGHTERS - DAY 66

Mariachi and his two mariachi companero's arm themselves with their special GUITAR CASES.

In preparing for the big show each has their own ritual. Lorenzo dances like a fighter, singing to himself.

Fideo, well... He drinks.

Mariachi prays by a candle in the bathroom. Mariachi closes his eyes for a moment of peace and meditation.

67 **EXT. GUITAR TOWN - MARIACHI FLASHBACK #3.** 67

A small girl, turns slowly to camera. Mariachi's daughter.

GIRL
Hola, papi.

Flashback to the Guitar Town we saw at the beginning of the movie. Only this is a flashback from a previous time. We see trucks approaching, almost like before. Carolina and their young daughter are crossing the wide street, watching as trucks BLAZE TOWARD THE TOWN.

Mariachi yells something from the same upper window he was in last time we saw him in this house. Carolina lifts their daughter and races faster across the street. The trucks gain speed, then WHIZ PAST.

Carolina and daughter are safe on the other side. However, heavily armed men exit their vehicles.

Mariachi is running down the stairs furiously.

He gets outside in time to see MARQUEZ open fire on them. Mariachi is hit, he falls back in the hailstorm of bullets.

The trucks ride off. Mariachi sits up. In pain. Bleeding profusely from multiple bullet wounds. Mariachi, on his knees, lifts his daughter. Limp in his arms. Carolina lies lifeless before him.

Mariachi is back in his little bathroom. Preparing. We understand his motivation. Now to see it through.

He crosses himself and leaves.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. COUP STREETS - CITIZENS IN ARMS - DAY 68

An armed CITIZEN runs out into the street, and opens fire on the front line troops. He is mowed down. Others in the town follow suit.

Some are painted in their DAY of the DEAD skull face paint.

The citizenry of Tlaxcala begin taking up ARMS in defense of the President and the incoming troops. As wild as it seems, it is not an uncommon occurrence. Again, this scene will be designed to give the Coup battle it's scale and scope.

A GIANT STREET FIGHT begins. (more details to follow)

CUT TO:

69 EXT. COUP STREETS - THE THREE MARIACHI'S JOIN THE BATTLE - DAY 69

The three Mariachi's come up the opposite street. A wild, wide screen shot of the three crazy guitar case wielding gunmen. Determination on their faces.

MARIACHI
I'll go around back. Meet me in five minutes.

Mariachi branches off. Lorenzo and Fideo get closer to the battle. Getting nervous. The Battle suddenly COMES to THEM. They hide behind a wall near the fortress. Sharp shooters all around begin firing on anything that moves.

LORENZO
Just lay low and they'll leave us alone.

Fideo aims his gun and shoots an officer. All hell breaks loose.

LORENZO
(What the hell are you doing? We're dressed like this to AVOID trouble!)

Fideo swigs from his flask.

FIDEO
I don't like Militaria.

Lorenzo crosses himself.

CUT TO:

70 INT. FORTRESS - DAY 70

Mariachi makes his moves. Follows the path he took earlier with the other mariachis when they played for El Presidente. Mariachi gets inside the fortress with some cool action. (to be developed)

CUT TO:

71 EXT. COUP STREETS - BATTLE - DAY 71

Fideo and Lorenzo are hiding from snipers, who pick off the wall of their hiding place brick by brick. Lorenzo is shaking.

LORENZO
I can't shoot.

Fideo gives him a familiar look of disdain.

LORENZO
Fideo... I can't shoot.

FIDEO
Then Sing.

LORENZO
What?

FIDEO
You're just nervous. You'll shoot better if you sing.

LORENZO
What do you do to shoot bett...

Fideo's already taking a swig. Lorenzo nods. Makes sense.

LORENZO
Que bonitos ojos tienes...

Lorenzo spins out of hiding. BOOM BOOM BOOM. (With the music) Three HITS. Lorenzo slips back into hiding. From here we can see in the distance a man on a high perch, falling dead, all the way to the ground.

The one that was getting close to them.

LORENZO
Debajo de esos dos cejas...

BOOM BOOM BOOM. More bodies.

LORENZO
Que bonitos ojos tienes...

FIDEO
Let's go...

LORENZO
MALAGUEEENNNNAAAA!

MUSIC up BIG, gunbattle at FULL BLAST. This is what the last scene in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid would have looked like had the movie not ended.

Lorenzo is holding his own.

But Fideo is SHOOTING with his FINGERS... oops... He maybe had a little too much to drink. He realizes his error, laughs, then reaches for his REAL GUNS.

Instantly he makes up for the lost time, and takes out a number of well hidden marksmen in a colorful display of gunfighting that mixes matador moves with a swaggering, drunken FREEDOM that really does make sense in an odd way.

Tries again. Shoots everybody, fancy moves. One person from above falls, and LANDS on FIDEO. He laughs.

LORENZO
SALEROOOOOOOSSSSSSAAAAA

A MISSLE LAUNCHES. Lorenzo DUCKS. The MISSILE EXPLODES behind him.

Fideo gets out from under the dead body as two or three infidels run up on him. Guns trained. Lorenzo steps in an uses his FLAMETHROWER GUITAR CASE (surprise!) to set them ABLAZE.

The whole TOWNSFOLK join in the battle. We see them in their homes, arming themselves. Some have very sophisticated weaponry for simple towns folk. One old woman has an ancient pistola that is held together with rubber bands. She fights too. Everyone is taking up arms to show their support of El Presidente in FULL FORCE.

LORENZO
Let's get inside. They'll take it from here.

Fideo lifts himself up and they both run back to the fortress.

The image in the streets is AWESOME... Black smoke bellows from the streets as bullets fly from every direction.

The TACO MAN, hiding behind his metal Taco cart, pushes his cart a little closer to the battle for a better look. BULLETS Riddle the side. He checks the damage. Hey, not bad. Pretty solid little cart. He eats one of his own tacos and watches the battle.

The troops don't know what to think. The battle is TURNING. The townsfolk is now represented in the music, for the operatic score now includes CHOIR, and everything feels BIG.

To counter, the Troops bring in THE TANK.

Fideo grabs his fat guitar case. He pulls out the remote control and sets the bomb that lies within. He opens the wheel system. Shuts the case. Activates, then REMOTE PILOTS it.

The little fat case on wheels flies fast on it's across the pavement. He navigates it RIGHT TOWARDS the big TANK.

The TANK DRIVER sees this GUITAR CASE blasting towards him. He follows it with his eyes. As it crashes into the tank. Fideo pushes a red button.

KABOOM. The tank is airborne. FLIPS and LANDS HEAVILY on some troops that were in front of it.

A couple of townsfolk carry their GATTLING GUN out into the street and take the TACO CART from TACO MAN. The umbrella is tossed off and the GATTLING GUN is BOLTED to the lid of the metal cart.

The two peasants then PUSH the cart across the street.. FIRING all the way... The Gattling Gun taking it's toll against the heavy military machinery.

CUT TO:

72 INT. TAXICAB - OUTSIDE COUP STREETS - DAY 72

The TAXI CAB transporting SANDS and the Chicle boy stops short of the town of Tlaxcala. Sands can feel something's wrong.

SANDS
Why are we stopping?

The Cabbie is spouting out madness in Spanish, refusing to go any further.

SANDS
Why not?

The cab driver points out the window, and tells Sands to look for himself.

SANDS
I can't fucking see.

The Cabbie asks him if he can at least HEAR. Sands listens.

We hear the sounds and once camera pushes past the Cabbie, we can now see out the front window: The COUP has taken over the streets up ahead like some crazed, bloody street festival. The boy describes the goings on to Sands.

Sands dials a number into his phone for backup support. It hangs up.

SANDS
Looks like I'm on my own.

The boy opens the door to lead Sands.

CHICLE BOY
WE'RE on our own.

Sands thinks. Blood seeping from his eyes a bit. They exit the cab. Sands takes his Jacket off and tosses it inside.

He's wearing black gloves, black shirt, black vest. He straps on his retrieved holsters, guns and clips. He looks like an action hero.

He and the boy stride towards the Battle. The boy leads Sands by his black glove. The cab tears away. Backwards. Fast.

CUT TO:

73 INT. FORTRESS - MARIACHI CONFRONTS PRESIDENT - DAY 73

They doors to the Oval Office Burst open. The Presidente's guards carry in the Presidente's key ADVISOR. Mortally shot.

EL PRESIDENTE
We can't stay here any longer, Miguel.

Miguel, the YOUNG MAN grabs the Presidente by the arm and begins pushing him through the fortress.

YOUNG MAN
This way Presidente, This way Presidente...

El Presidente follows YOUNG MAN through. They end up in a big room outside the Oval Office. Other Men are waiting with guns.

EL PRESIDENTE
Who are...

The Young Man steps aside from El Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE
Miguel?

YOUNG MAN
Perdon, Senor. You have a meeting with Marquez.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. The armed Men are mowed down. Young Man backs against the wall in shock. The THREE MARIACHIs step over the bodies of the armed men, all dead.

YOUNG MAN
This wasn't your job.

The Young Man produces a weapon. Aims it at Fideo. Fideo unloads on him. Young Man goes down. Fideo pulls out the 100 pesos he got for playing the day before.

FIDEO
You should have given a bigger tip.

PRESIDENTE
(re: the mariachis)
Who are you?

MARIACHI
Sons of Mexico.

CUT TO:

74 **INT. OVAL OFFICE - SAME** 74

They escort El Presidente back through the Oval Office.

PRESIDENTE
Why would the people want me dead. I've done nothing but try to help them.

The half drunk Fideo gets belligerent and leads the Presidente to the main window.

FIDEO
What are you talking about?

He shoves the president in front of the window.

FIDEO
Look out there.

LORENZO
Fideo!

Lorenzo pulls the president out of way in time. A few bullets graze the window. Lorenzo gives Fideo a look.

FIDEO
Well... Don't look too close. But your people are out there... Fighting Marquez. Fighting for YOU. They believe in you, Presidente. Don't let them down.

The President peeks.

Mariachi removes his jacket.

MARIACHI
Take off your coat.

The President removes his Ornate Presidential coat. Mariachi hands him his jacket and a bandanna.

75 **INT. MAIN ROOM - SAME** 75

Marquez and his men tear into the main room where the Mariachi's mowed down YOUNG MAN and his men. They step over the bodies. Has the battle already taken place?

MARQUEZ
(Go get the money.)

Some of the men branch off downstairs. Marquez and the others continue upstairs.

76 **INT. OVAL OFFICE - SAME** 76

Marquez tears into the Presidential Chamber, and is surprised to find him at the window, partially covered by the curtains. Looking out on the street below.

MARQUEZ
Presidente...

MARIACHI, wearing the President's coat and looking very dangerous and cool, turns around to face Marquez.

Marquez's eyes narrow. Mariachi steps out in to the room.

Marquez and Mariachi. Face to face. Practically in SHOWDOWN Stance in this large chamber. Much like we saw them during BELINI's opening Story Flashback, only that was stylized. This is real. (well, sort of.)

77 **INT. BELOW CHAMBER - SAME** 77

We see Lorenzo, Fideo and then the PRESIDENTE walking down a hall. Presidente wears the bandanna and Mariachi's jacket. He looks humorous, but well disguised.

Lorenzo and Fideo lead him out of the stronghold.

CUT TO:

78 **INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY** 78

Marquez tells his men to back out.

They do. They close the door. The door bolts. Nice touch.

Mariachi and Marquez circle each other. Slowly. Determined. Tense.

A SHOT FROM ABOVE.

Mariachi and Marquez are in a Mexican OVAL OFFICE. They circle the circular room. It resembles the circle at the end of GOOD, BAD and UGLY.

They stop. Marquez smiles sickly. He's going to enjoy this.

MARQUEZ
Carolina?

MARIACHI
Muerta. (dead)

Mariachi draws his double barrel sawed off shotgun pistol.

Two shots only.

Marquez gets his digs in.

MARQUEZ
Tu Hija. (your daughter?)

MARIACHI
Muerta.(dead)

Marquez has his trusty automatic. He spins the extension barrel off. Tosses it aside.

MARQUEZ
Y tu? (and you?)

MARIACHI
Muerto. (dead)

MARQUEZ
(laughs)
Y Yo? (and I?)

MARIACHI
Viviendo, bien... (Alive, and well...)

Marquez raises his gun to fire, but Mariachi does an amazing DODGE MANEUVER, like a BULLFIGHTER. The sort of grace we've only seen in the 'blown out of proportion' Belini tall tale. Marquez fires and MISSES.

Mariachi fires his first barrel. It takes out MARQUEZ's knees in a messy spray.

MARIACHI
...en el infierno. (...in Hell.)

Marquez raises his gun. Mariachi lets the other barrel blast.

The men outside KICK the door, busting it open. The window is ajar.

Marquez lays in pieces on the ground.

Mariachi is gone.

CUT TO:

79 **EXT. FORTRESS - ROOFTOP** 79

Mariachi is actually climbing over the roof of the stronghold. He ends up in a high perch, above the battle raging below. People notice the Presidential jacket the Mariachi is wearing and they CHEER.

PEOPLE
EL PRESIDENTE! VIVA EL PRESIDENTE!

Great trailer shot of MARIACHI on the roof overlooking the battle weary crowds... Among smoke and fire... Cheering.

He ducks away.

CUT TO:

80 **INT. MONEY VAULT - DAY** 80

The President hears the cheers and asks Lorenzo why they're taking a detour. Lorenzo, singing to himself, puts his finger to his lips. Pushes the President inside a room. Closes the door.

Inside the room, Lorenzo and Fideo empty their cases of their guns. The President is fascinated by these characters. Lorenzo and Fideo being filling their guitar cases and Mariachi's case (which the President was holding) with CASH from the cash pile. The President picks up a stack of cash.